Assignment on: Article on Bengali Nation

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Date of submission: 15 May 2013

Bengali Nation

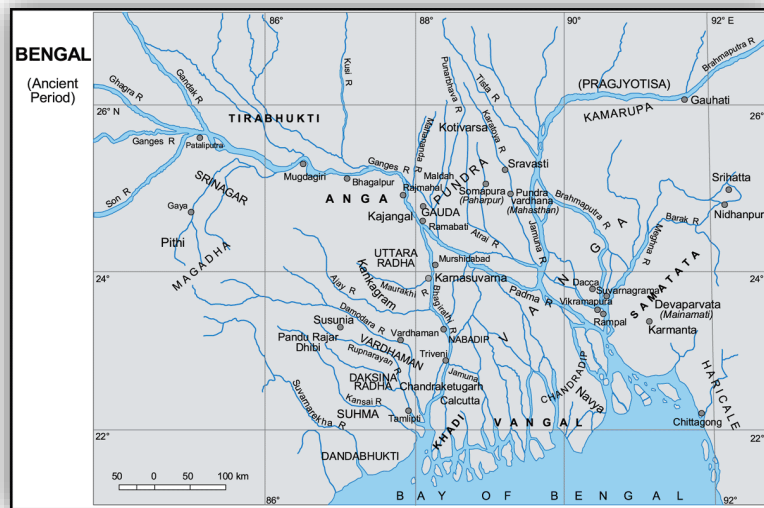
Perhaps you are feeling pride that you have just spat through the window imitating a western. Or, perhaps some of your hair is brown colored to be looked like one of westerns. You do this thinking that they are at the summit of human civilization. Do you know what they think of your nation? They think, we are not fully civilized. Even when Darwinism emerged, they started thinking that only Europeans of white skin are fully human and other nations are still at primitive stage. Only if you knew our glorious past, you would feel pride of being a Bengali and not being a western. We have many unique history to be proud of. Can anyone show us a nation born on the basis of mother tongue?

Our history begins before 2000 BC with the Harappā civilization. Microsoft's encyclopedia Encarta says, "Harappā, locality in the Indus River Valley in Pakistan, which dates back to before 2000 bc. Archaeologists have found the remains of a city and evidence of a possible link between Indian and Sumerian cultures." Our people are probably the decedents of Harappāns who were decedents of Mesopotamians. The basis and root grammar of our language's mother language was probably from that civilization. Even Harappāns were great builders. Many of their architectures still remain to make us witness of our ancestors' achievement in art and architecture. At that time, Europe were still in darkness. Although they have many made-up stories about their nation, they do not have much historical evidence like us.

The Harappān or Indus civilization is known to have comprised two large cities, Harappa and Mohenjo-daro, and more than 100 towns and villages, often of relatively small size. The two cities were each perhaps originally about one mile square in overall dimensions, and their outstanding magnitude suggests political centralization, either in two large states or in a single

great empire with alternative capitals, a practice having analogies in Indian history. Or it may be that Harappa succeeded Mohenjo-daro, which is known to have been devastated more than once by exceptional floods. The southern region of the civilization, on the Kathiawar Peninsula and beyond, appears to be of later origin than the major Indus sites. The civilization was literate, and its script, with some 250 to 500 characters, has been partly and tentatively deciphered; the language has been indefinitely identified as Dravidian. The nuclear dates of the civilization appear to be about 2500–1700 BCE, though the southern sites may have lasted later into the 2nd millennium BCE. (Britannica)

Sometimes our civilization is dated back to Noah's deluge. Archeologists confirmed the evidence of a great flood occurred around 3000 BC on Mesopotamian regions. After the flood, remaining people were spread everywhere on earth carrying the story of the flood with them. Events similar to those described in the biblical story occur also in Greek mythology. Among other peoples whose folklore and legends contain accounts of a devastating deluge are those of southern Asia, the aborigines of North, Central, and South America, and the natives of Polynesia. The Chinese and Japanese have stories of floods, but these do not, as a rule, destroy the entire earth. (Encarta) Thus, some Puranas suggest that we are from the survivors of the flood. We know most of the nation and religion have their own history. But most of the history lack archeological evidences. Mormons, for example, a modern north-American Christian church claims that they have archeological evidences. But reality is totally against their claim. An article on the internet says, "I believe the authors are making cases out of too little evidence and do not adequately address the problems that archeology and the book of Mormon present …" (Wilson, 1992)

The reconstruction of the history of Bengal in the pre-Muslim period is difficult due to paucity of sources. The difficulty is felt more acutely for the earlier period, down to the 4th century AD, when Bengal came under the Imperial Guptas. For this period we have to depend on very scanty references in the Vedic, Epic and Puranic literature as well as on the available archaeological evidence. From the Gupta period onwards we get written records in the form of epigraphs and literature which contain information on the history of the 'region' of Bengal.

Background In the earliest period Bengal was known to be inhabited by different groups of people, whose names came to be associated with the area inhabited by them. Thus the ancient janapadas of vanga, pundra, radha and gauda came to be recognised as inhabited by non-Aryan ethnic groups bearing those names. samatata was an important janapada in the trans-Meghna region of Bangladesh in its southeastern part (Comilla-Noakhali area). The name of this janapada was purely descriptive and had no ethnic connection. The Chittagong area with its adjacent areas was known by the name of harikela. The existence of these janapadas is known from later Vedic literature, as areas inhabited by non-Aryan people.

Aryan influence in ancient India came to be felt in the northwestern parts in the middle of the second millennium BC and it took a long time for the Aryans to reach the eastern limits of the subcontinent. Thus the people of Bengal felt the tide of Aryanisation quite late. From about 5th

century BC it pushed into Bengal from the west and it took about one thousand years to Aryanise the whole of Bengal. By the time Aryan influence reached Bengal, it had become feeble during its long march through the entire area of northern India. Thus the pre-Aryan elements in the culture of the people of Bengal got time to become deeply rooted and even under Aryan influence, which was feeble, they retained many elements in their life and culture which were non-Aryan and pre-Aryan.

Greek and Latin sources (3rd century BC - 1st century AD) refer to an eastern Indian nation/state called 'Gangaridae' (Greek)/ 'Gangaridai' (Latin) which was very strong militarily. Scholars have located 'Gangaridai' in parts of southern and southeastern Bengal, adjacent to the mouths of the Ganges (Bhagirathi and Padma).

In the first half of the 8th century AD Bengal was overwhelmed by repeated foreign invasions, the most notable of which was the invasion of Yashovarman of Kanauj (725-752 AD). The glories of Yasovarman were soon eclipsed by Lalitaditya of Kashmir. The Kashmiri historian Kalhana refers to five Gauda kings defeated by Lalitaditya and this clearly indicates a state of political disintegration in Gauda, which became a field of struggle for the local chiefs who assumed independence in the absence of any central authority. The successive foreign invasions destroyed the political equilibrium and hastened the process of disintegration.

The Pala Dynasty founded by Gopala in the middle of the 8th century AD, ruled Bengal for about four hundred years through many vicissitudes. During this long period of eighteen generations of kings we notice ups and downs in the fortunes of the dynasty. But there can hardly be any doubt regarding the fact that the rule of the Palas formed a glorious chapter in the history of ancient Bengal. The history of the long line of Pala rulers can be viewed under different phases:

(I) Period of Ascendancy under Dharmapala (c 781-821 AD) and Devapala (c 821-861 AD); followed by a (II) Period of Stagnation (c 861-995 AD) to be rejuvenated by mahipala i (c 995-1043 AD), who is considered to be the second founder of the dynasty; and the last phase, (III) a Period of Decline and Disintegration, which was halted briefly by the vigorous rule of ramapala (c 1082-1124 AD). But the Pala Empire did not last long after him and the final collapse came with the rise of the Senas in the third quarter of the 12th century AD.

Following the establishment of Muslim rule in Bengal in the 13th century, Bangla came under the influence of Arabic, Persian and Turkish. Persian was the language of the court during Muslim rule in the 14th and 15th centuries. Because of this special status as well as other cultural influences, Bangla picked up many Persian words at this time. In the 16th century, with the Portuguese inroads, several Portuguese words entered Bangla; for example, words such as anaras (pineapple), ata (custard-apple) and tamak (tobacco).

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Later came English people to India as well as in Bangla for business purpose. But they never limited their purpose only within business. Eventually they started craving political power. They managed some of the leaders to let them enter into the politics. When they attained much power they started thinking of ruling India. Traitors like Mir Zafar helped them defeat Nabob Shirajuddowla and his army in 1757. With this the history of English theft is began.

Many of our treasures are still available in British Museum. They ruled and pulled up everything from us whatever they can pull and adorned their homeland. They gave-up their rule from us in 1947, leaving behind a lame land. They imposed such an educational system that the

highest position of an educated people is to be their clerk. They divided the whole land into two, India and Pakistan (East and West). Again, all kind of discriminations were imposed upon our East-Pakistan part. They declared that our mother tongue will not be a national language, instead, only Urdu will be the national language. In 1952 many gave their lives to attain Bangla as our national language. Later days were more and more oppressive. West Pakistanis wanted to disinherit us from our parts and many of new Mir Zafars helped and encouraged them to invade and kill East Pakistanis. 25 March of 1971, army invaded Dhaka and killed innumerable lives. Our war of independence started then and lasted until our victory in 16 December.

42 years have been passed after our independence. We are still a struggling nation, because we are trapped in the poisonous trap of democracy. Because of this ineffective system of politics we never think ourselves united. One political party cannot tolerate others. Even they go as far as killing the opponents. So, what we need to overcome is to be united. Once we are united, there is no nation in the world can intrude into our courses.

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